Warminster Urban District

Warminster, February 5th, 1898.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

It is again my privilege to present to you my annual report as to the sanitary condition of the town during the past year.

During that period the deaths of 98 persons have been registered in the district. This, after deducting eight deaths in the Cottage Hospital of persons from outside the district, would give a death-rate for the year of 16.1 per 1,000, estimated on the population of the last census. One death was recorded from diphtheria, one from enteric fever, and eight from measles.

The births numbered 127, equal to a birth-rate of 21.9 per 1,000.

The following table epitomises the ages at which death occurred throughout the district:—Under one year of age, 8; over one and under five years of age, 10; over five and under 15 years of age, 5; over 15 and under 25, 3; over 25 and under 65, 29; over 65 years of age, 43.

I will now refer to the presence of infectious diseases in the town during the year. Scarlet fever and diphtheria have been very prevalent, 14 of the former and 19 of the latter disease having been reported to me. I stated in my report of last year that an outbreak of diphtheria had occurred in December, which was not stamped out for some time after the commencement of the new year, and of the 19 cases mentioned above, 11 occurred during the month of January. The remaining cases were reported to me as follows, viz., one in March, two in April, three in May, one in August, and one in December. The cases of scarlet fever, which were of a very mild type, occurred during the latter part of the year, ten cases being reported to me in August, and two in October and December. Many of the cases were members of the same household. Four cases of scarlet fever and six of diphtheria were removed to the isolation hospital.

Measles continued over from 1896, but disappeared before the end of January. The disease re-appeared however, in October in a very virulent form, causing eight deaths, attacking first the children attending the Sambourne Schools, necessitating the closing of that school, and immediately that was opened the disease spread to the Chapel street and South street schools, which were also closed, with marked benefit in checking the spread of the disease.

The case of enteric fever occurred in an adult working on the railway, and was not, I think, caused by any local insanitary conditions.

There has been a great improvement noticed in the condition of "Swan river," which for some years past has caused an intolerable nuisance during the summer months, and the road gratings, the condition of which I made some remarks on in my last annual report, have been carefully inspected, and, where necessary, properly trapped.

The treatment and disposal of the sewage of the town, which for some years has been a nuisance to persons living in the vicinity of the present sewage farm, is, I hope, approaching a satisfactory solution, as within the last few weeks the Council have submitted for the approval of the Local Government Board the septic tank system for the treatment of the sewage, and pending the acceptance or rejection of the suggested plan, a temporary scheme has been adopted of pumping the sewage on fresh land close by the present farm, which since it has been in operation, has been most successful in abating the nuisance.

A circular letter has been addressed to the different local authorities by the Local Government Board, drawing their attention to the condition of the water supply in their several districts, and advising them to exercise every precaution to secure the water supply from risk of contamination. The Council fully recognise, looking to recent calamities in other parts, the urgency of the case, and at their last meeting had under consideration the desirability of having a thorough chemical and microscopical analysis of the water made. I cannot too strongly commend the wisdom of such a course, although I have no doubt, from frequent examinations, of the absolute purity of the supply, nor do I see how it is possible for contamination to occur, leakage into the mains alone excepted, as the water does not see daylight till it reaches the consumer. There is only one dwelling-house anywhere near the source of supply, and that is so situated that it cannot be a source of danger. The whole surface of the land from which the springs originate is a vast wood, and the springs are tapped in one case at the exit, and in the other almost immediately after the exit from the earth.

All cases of infectious disease have been personally visited by myself, and where necessary the cases have been removed to the isolation hospital. Every part of the town has been inspected at regular intervals and house to house visitations have been made of all the cottages, and all insanitary conditions reported to the Council at their monthly meetings.

The inspection of the bakehouses and slaughter-houses has been properly carried out, and in one or two instances have been adversely commented on.

Six cases of overcrowding have been brought to your notice, and five cottages that were uninhabitable have been put in proper repair by order of the Council, and in two or three cases of impure water supply, the town water has been laid on.

The usual tables dealing with the mortality, etc., in the district accompany this report.—I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, yours faithfully,

FREDERICK I. FLOWER.
Medical Officer of Health for the
Warminster Urban District Council.

TABLE OF POPULATION, BIRTHS, AND OF NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS SICKNESS, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1897, in the Warminster Urban District; classified according to DISEASES, AGE and LOCALITIES.

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; Public Institutions being shown as separate localities.	Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	New Cases of Sickness in each locality, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health.				Number of such cases removed from their Homes in the several localities for treatment in Isolation Hospital.	
			Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas	Scarlatina	Diphtheria
Town of Warminster	127	Under 5	5	7			2	2
		5 upwd.	9	12	1	2	2	4
Totals	127	Under 5	5	7			2	2
		5 upwd.	9	12	1	2	2	4

TABLE OF DEATHS During the year 1897, in the Warminster Urban District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these Statistics, public institutions being shown as separate localities.	Mortality from all causes, at subjoined ages.								Mortality from subjoined causes, distinguishing deaths of children under five years of age.							
	At all ages.	Und'r 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards		Diphtheria	Enteric or Typhoid	Measles	Phthisis	Bronchitis, Pneumonia & Pleurisy	Heart Disease	Injuries	All other Diseases	Total
Warminster	98	8	9	5	8	29	43	Under 5.	1	1	7	4	2	8	6	8	18
								5 upwds.			1		12			48	80
Total	98	8	9	5	3	29	43	Under 5.	1	1	7	4	2	8	6	8	18
								5 upwds.			1		12			48	80

The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above records of mortality:—

Names of localities adopted for the purpose of these statistics, public institutions being shown as separate localities.	At all ages.	5 and under 15	25 and under 65	65 and upwards	5 upwards	Rheumatic Fever	Phthisis	Bronchitis, Pneumonia & Pleurisy	Heart Disease	Injuries	All other diseases	Total
Deaths occurring within the district among persons not belonging thereto	8					1	1	1	1	1	4	8